

Florida Alternate Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

PURPOSE OF THE FLORIDA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities be included in each state's system of accountability and that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) also speaks to the inclusion of all children in the state's accountability system by requiring states to report student achievement for all students as well as for specific groups of students (e.g., students with disabilities, students for whom English is a second language) on a disaggregated basis. These federal laws reflect an ongoing concern about equity. All students should be academically challenged and taught to high standards. The involvement of all students in the educational accountability system provides a means of measuring progress toward that goal.

To provide an option for participation of all students in the state's accountability system, including those for whom participation in the general statewide assessment (the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test[®] [FCAT]) is not appropriate, even with accommodations, Florida has developed the Florida Alternate Assessment. The new alternate assessment design for Florida is based on the Sunshine State Standards Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Mathematics, and Science. Access Points are aligned to the Sunshine State Standards with reduced levels of complexity: Participatory, Supported and Independent, with Participatory level being least complex. Developed to allow students to progress through all three levels of complexity per item, the Florida Alternate Assessment's tiered process provides students the opportunity to work to their potential in each content area. This is critical as educators seek to provide access to the general education curriculum and foster higher expectations for the wide diversity of students with significant cognitive disabilities. It is expected that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible under IDEA will participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

1. *Who determines if a student should take the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Participation in the state testing program is mandatory for all students attending public school. It is expected that the majority of students with disabilities will participate in the FCAT, the general statewide assessment. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are considered to include a small number of students whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining achievement standards, even with the very

best instruction. The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) teams are responsible for determining whether students with disabilities are eligible to participate in alternate assessment based on the criteria set out in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC. In order to facilitate informed and equitable decision making, IEP teams should answer each of the following participation guideline questions when determining the appropriate assessment:

- Is the student unable to master the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course accommodations?
- Is the student's demonstrated cognitive ability the primary reason for the inability to master these standards?
- Is the student participating in a modified curriculum based on competencies in the Sunshine State Standards Access Points for all academic areas?
- Does the student require extensive direct instruction in academic and vocational competencies as well as domestic, community living, and leisure activities?
- Does the student have deficits in adaptive behavior, as demonstrated by the inability to function effectively and independently in everyday living skills (interpersonal relations and social interactions) across a variety of settings?

If the IEP team determines that all five of the questions accurately characterize a student's current educational situation, then the Florida Alternate Assessment should be used to provide a meaningful evaluation of the student's current academic achievement. If "yes" is not indicated in all five areas, then the student is not eligible to be assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment and must participate in the FCAT with accommodations, as appropriate.

The Florida Alternate Assessment Participation Checklist can be obtained at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1858/AA%20Check.pdf>.

2. *May students take portions of both the FCAT and the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

No. The decision regarding how a student will participate in statewide assessment is not content-area-specific. The Sunshine State Standards Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities drive the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment. Answering "yes" to all five of the participation guideline questions indicates that the student is participating in a modified curriculum based on competencies in the Sunshine State Standards Access Points in **all** content areas; therefore, the student would be administered only the Florida Alternate Assessment.

3. *In which grades is the Florida Alternate Assessment administered?*

The Florida Alternate Assessment administration aligns with the FCAT and consists of test items in Reading and Mathematics in grades 3–10; Writing in grades 4, 8, and 10; and Science in grades 5, 8, and 11.

4. *What about the students for whom the Florida Alternate Assessment is too difficult?*

The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed to allow maximum access to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Some students may require additional accommodations to gain access to the assessment. Additional accommodations are available to allow for the use of Assistive Technological Devices and for students with visual impairments, students with hearing impairments, students with limited physical ability and/or mobility, and English Language Learners.

5. *Can visually impaired students be assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Yes. All students whose IEP team has determined to meet the requirements as noted in the State distributed checklist are appropriate for the Florida Alternate Assessment. The Florida Alternate Assessment is a tool that has been designed to assess students who have significant cognitive disabilities with numerous accommodations embedded in its development. In addition to using real items as an accommodation for visually impaired students, the assessment is also available in braille with tactile graphics.

6. *What about students in a residential setting or in a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility?*

Every student who meets the requirements should be assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment. For residential facilities, all assessment materials will be mailed to the students' home district. The home district is responsible for ensuring that teachers at the residential facility have been properly trained in the administration procedures and that their students are assessed appropriately. For DJJ facilities, materials will be mailed to the district where the facility is located. That DJJ facility is then responsible for ensuring that all students in the facility are assessed appropriately.

7. *Will there be a Florida Alternate Assessment waiver?*

No. Section 1008.22(3)(c)(6), Florida Statutes, indicates that participation in the testing program is mandatory for all students attending public school. In Florida, students attending public schools either participate in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test or, by determination of the IEP Team, in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

8. *What is the district's responsibility for administering the Florida Alternate Assessment to students served through the McKay Scholarship Program or by a home education program?*

Students who meet the criteria for participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment and are enrolled in private schools through the McKay Scholarship program, or are served through home education, must have a plan for administering the assessment if the parent chooses the option to have their child participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

9. *What is the district's responsibility for administering the Florida Alternate Assessment to students served through the Homebound/Hospitalized program?*

Districts with students served in the Homebound/Hospitalized program who meet the requirements for alternate assessment should be assessed with the Florida Alternate Assessment.

10. *What do we do if a student transfers into our school district right before the testing window?*

All students enrolled in the district during the time the statewide assessment is being administered must be assessed in the manner identified on the students' IEPs. Districts will be provided with Blank Scannable Student Answer Sheets. Student demographic information should be filled in completely and the student's responses recorded on the form.

TEST SECURITY

11. *Is the Florida Alternate Assessment a secure test?*

Yes. The security of all test materials must be maintained before, during, and after test administration. Some of the materials are secure documents and have security numbers used to account for each document. Under no circumstances are students permitted to handle secure materials before or after test administration. A complete description of all test security policies and procedures can be found in the most recent *Florida Alternate Assessment Procedural Manual*.

12. *What will be considered "secure" materials?*

Student specific test materials, i.e., test booklets and scannable answer sheets, are considered secure materials. Teachers may have access to test booklets in addition to the response booklets, cards and strip packets and passage booklets prior to testing in order to become familiar with and to organize the materials prior to the testing sessions. However, these materials must be checked out and returned to the school's security area each day.

13. *Are the test books going to be coded/numbered for security purposes?*

Yes. A security number is used to account for each secure document, which are student specific. Test booklets and scannable answer sheets have tracking numbers. Security checklists are provided to school sites in order to track these secure documents. Response Booklets, cards and strip packets, and passage booklets are designed to be used more than

once and have several pieces in each grade level. These materials do not contain security numbers but must be tracked on a daily basis on the *Auxiliary Materials Security Checklist*.

14. *Who will be required to shred the test materials—State or District?*

The State is responsible for providing directions for handling test materials. Secure, **NOT-to-be-scored** materials will be sent to a contractor for destruction. Please refer to the most recent *Procedural Manual* for detailed instruction on how materials are to be handled. If there are additional questions, contact the administration contractor, Piedra Data Services, via telephone at (305) 254-9996, or via e-mail at peidradata.com.

15. *May the test administrator keep the test manuals and materials locked in the classroom?*

No. The Florida Alternate Assessment is a secure assessment. Test administrators must return test materials to the school coordinator to be placed in the security area immediately after each day of testing. Under no circumstances should test materials remain in classrooms or be taken out of the building overnight. Please contact your assessment coordinator for district policy on the security and handling of test materials for students who are in the Homebound/Hospitalized program.

16. *May a copy of the Florida Alternate Assessment test booklet be kept at the school after the test administration window?*

No. All test materials are to be turned in after the administration window is closed. School coordinators will be responsible for verifying that all distributed test materials have been returned. If any of the test materials are missing, an investigation must be conducted.

17. *May test administrators take the Florida Alternate Assessment test booklets and/or cards and strips packets materials home to prepare for test administration?*

No. Under no circumstances should test materials remain in classrooms or be taken out of the building overnight.

18. *What do we do if a stimulus/response card gets destroyed by a student?*

Teachers (test administrators) should contact their school coordinator for additional materials. School coordinators should contact district coordinators if additional materials are needed. District Coordinators should contact Piedra Data Services to request specific test booklets and/or additional test materials, if needed. Teachers should follow instructions for handling damaged materials provided in the most recent *Procedural Manual*.

19. *May parents have a copy of the assessment?*

No. Like the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the Florida Alternate Assessment is a secure test document. Districts, schools, parents, and teachers will receive

individualized reports on student performance. Additionally, in the fall of each year, practice materials composed of released test items will be made available.

20. *Do schools/districts have to verify that Florida Alternate Assessment security has been maintained?*

Yes. District coordinators must ensure that principals, school coordinators, and test administrators sign a *Florida Alternate Assessment Test Administration and Security Agreement* stating that they have read and agree to abide by all test administration and security policies and procedures. Any person who assists the school coordinator or test administrator must also sign and return an agreement. These materials should be filed for a one-year time period by the school coordinator in a secure location at the school.

21. *What about unused scan sheets? Are they shredded or returned?*

Unused scan sheets (“pre-identified” and “non-pre-identified”) should be returned to Piedra Data Services with the **to-be-scored**, scannable answer sheets, according to instructions provided in the *Procedural Manual*.

22. *Will all of the test materials (scan sheets and test booklets) be returned to the same address?*

Two separate contractors process the **to-be-scored** (scannable answer sheets) items and **NOT-to-be-scored** (response booklets, cards and strips, passage booklets, and test booklets) items. School and district coordinators should follow the detailed instructions for returning materials provided in the most recent *Procedural Manual*. Mispackaged materials will delay reporting of student results.

TEST ADMINISTRATORS

23. *Who is considered “certified” to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

The test administrator must be a certified teacher or other licensed professional who is familiar with the student and is trained in the assessment procedures.

24. *Are Speech/Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists considered licensed to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Yes. Licensed professionals who have worked extensively with the student and are trained in the assessment procedures can administer the Florida Alternate Assessment,

25. *Does the teacher have to work with the student in order to administer the test to him/her?*

Yes. However, under extremely unusual circumstances, where the student's teacher will be out during the assessment administration window, another teacher or licensed professional may be called in to administer the assessment. The teacher or licensed professional administering the assessment should be trained in the assessment procedures, familiar with the student's mode of communication, and be able to establish adequate rapport with the student.

26. *May non-certified teachers administer the test (permanent substitute teachers)?*

It is highly recommended that the student's certified teacher administer the Florida Alternate Assessment. However, if the student's teacher of record is a long-term substitute teacher and is the teacher most familiar with the student, then the district may decide to allow this teacher to administer the assessment if the teacher received formal training.

27. *May non-certified support personnel administer the Florida Alternate Assessment (e.g., secretary, paraprofessional, 1:1 aide, or interpreter)?*

No. The test administrator must be a certified teacher or other licensed professional who has worked extensively with the student, and is trained in the assessment procedures.

28. *Are paraprofessionals allowed to assist the teacher in administering the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Paraprofessionals may assist with the class while the teacher is assessing individual students.

29. *Are paraprofessionals allowed to transfer answers from the test booklet to the Scannable Student Answer Sheet?*

No. Only certified teachers or licensed professionals may transfer the scores to the Scannable Student Answer Sheet.

30. *Will the Department of Education (DOE) ask for test administrator feedback after test administration?*

Yes. After the Field Test, valuable information was gained from the teacher survey. This information enabled the test developer and the test administration contractor, in collaboration with the DOE, to implement changes prior to the Operational Assessment. It is the intent of the DOE to seek similar additional input during each Spring Assessment. Teachers will be provided this information at the end of the administration window.

ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

31. *How many teachers need to be trained to administer the alternate assessment?*

The number of teachers a district trains to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment should be based on the number of students taking alternate assessment. In addition to classroom teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities, the district may elect to train other licensed or certified staff as backup administrators.

32. Should all ESE teachers be trained or only those with alternately assessed students?

Only teachers who work with students with significant cognitive disabilities should be trained to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment. However, it is best practice to have other Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers trained to serve as backup administrators.

33. May teachers who have not been trained watch the accompanying DVD and be able to administer the test?

No. It is imperative that teachers who administer the Florida Alternate Assessment receive face-to-face training prior to administering the test. Standardized teacher training is critical to the procedural validity of the test. The DVD is not all encompassing and is not intended to provide teachers with adequate skills and information to be able to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment effectively. The DVD is designed to be a refresher for trained teachers.

34. What are the annual training requirements for the Florida Alternate Assessment? Will additional training be mandatory for previously trained teachers?

Teachers who have been previously trained to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment will be required to update their training to address changes to administration practices. Complete training will be required for new personnel each year.

35. How will districts maintain a cadre of trainers?

Measured Progress, the assessment development contractor, will conduct annual train-the-trainer sessions. Districts will be offered the opportunity to either send new staff and/or previously trained staff to the training sessions and will be expected to have these trainers available to train new teachers in the administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment.

36. Will there be funding from the Florida DOE to pay for substitute teachers while teachers participate in training?

No. Districts will be responsible for classroom coverage for teachers who participate in the required training on the Florida Alternate Assessment.

37. Do schools/districts have to verify that test administrators have been trained?

Yes. Districts should maintain documentation (sign in sheets) of teachers who have been trained that can be made available to the DOE upon request.

TEST DESIGN (INCLUDING ALLOWABLE ACCOMMODATIONS)

38. *Will the DOE provide a list of acceptable accommodations and modifications for the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed to allow maximum access to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Traditional “accommodations,” such as presentation and response mode, flexible setting, and scheduling, are already embedded in the standard administration of this assessment. Some students may require additional accommodations to gain access to the assessment. Additional accommodations are available to allow the use of Assistive Technological Devices and for students with visual impairments, students with hearing impairments, students with limited physical ability and/or mobility, and English Language Learners. All accommodations used during the administration of the assessment should be documented in the student’s IEP and consistent with what the student uses on a daily basis during classroom instruction.

39. *How is “large print” defined on the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Florida Alternate Assessment uses large cards and a type (font) size of 30 point. Font sizes of 18 point or 20 point are considered large print.

40. *Can students who use assistive communication devices access the assessment?*

Yes. Students who are being assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment should use their standard classroom mode of communication, including the use of assistive communication devices. While the test administrator will choose language familiar to the student for the stem of each question, the test administrator should accept any response mode that the student uses to indicate a response.

41. *Are verbal responses acceptable?*

Yes, verbal responses are acceptable. The item stem “show me/tell me” should be individualized to correspond with the student’s normal mode of communication. While the test administrator will choose the terms to substitute for “show me/tell me,” the test administrator should accept any response mode that the student uses to indicate a response. For example, the test administrator substitutes “Sign me the card,” but rather than signing, the student touches a card in response. The touch should be considered the student’s response and should be counted as correct if the correct card was touched or incorrect if an incorrect card was touched.

42. *Students who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) generally have problems with ordering. Can the test have minimal distracters?*

The assessment consists of items that address three levels of complexity (Independent, Supported, and Participatory) with three response choices at each level. Each student enters an item at the Participatory Level and continues to work through each level of the item until he or she is unable to answer accurately at that level or completes the item accurately at the Independent Level. A scaffolding structure is in place at the Participatory Level only. Scaffolding at that level is a process of reducing the response options for the student if he or she is unable to respond accurately. This allows the student greater access to the items.

43. *Historically, the focus for participatory level students has been on providing instruction to prepare them for the “real world,” that is, functional skills for everyday life. Will this assessment address what is being taught?*

Yes. In 1977, IDEA required participation of all students in state accountability systems. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that all students have access to quality instruction in a common set of **academic** content standards. IDEA, aligning with NCLB, requires that all students be included in statewide assessment. In addition, NCLB requires that all students meet state expectations for Reading, Math, and Language Arts in an attempt to close the achievement gap.

The Florida Alternate Assessment measures student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards Access Points for Language Arts (reading and writing), Mathematics, and Science.

44. *How will students with visual impairments participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Additional accommodations are available for students who have been found eligible to receive special education services under the Visually Impaired program and/or students that have visually related accommodations noted on their current IEP. The use of accommodations must be in accordance with what the student uses on a daily basis during classroom instruction. A complete list of exchangeable items can be obtained by contacting Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist, at (850) 245-0475. For a detailed list of allowable accommodations for students with visual impairments, please consult the *Florida Alternate Assessment Administration Manual*.

45. *How will students with hearing impairments participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Additional accommodations are available for students who have been found eligible to receive special education services under the Deaf/Hard of Hearing program and/or students who have auditory related accommodations noted on their current IEP. The use of accommodations must be in accordance with what the student uses on a daily basis during classroom instruction. For a detailed list of allowable accommodations for students with hearing impairments, please consult the *Florida Alternate Assessment Administration Manual*.

46. *How will students with limited physical ability and/or mobility participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Additional accommodations are available for students who have been found eligible to receive special education services and whose access to the assessment is hindered due to limited physical ability and/or mobility. The use of hand-over-hand technique is allowable to steady the student; however, physical guidance to the correct answer is **ONLY** allowable during the final stage of scaffolding at the Participatory Level.

The use of accommodations must be in accordance with what the student uses on a daily basis during classroom instruction. For a detailed list of allowable accommodations for students with limited physical ability and/or mobility, please consult the *Florida Alternate Assessment Administration Manual*.

47. *How will English Language Learner (ELL) students participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Additional accommodations are available for students who have been found eligible to receive special education services and whose access to the assessment is hindered due to language. For a detailed list of allowable accommodations for ELL students, please consult the *Florida Alternate Assessment Administration Manual*.

48. *Are there teacher-gathered materials required to administer the Florida Alternate Assessment?*

Yes. Sometimes teachers may be asked to provide materials, such as rulers, calculators, or generic counters. Other materials that may be needed might include a metal spoon or a glass of water. Any teacher-gathered materials required for an item will be listed in the **Materials** column of the item and on the first page of the content area. Please also refer to this list in Appendix II of the *Administration Manual*.

49. *Will a list of real objects for students who are visually impaired (VI) be provided so they can be gathered?*

Yes. Each year the assessment developer will provide a list of real objects that may be substituted for VI students by grade and subject.

50. *May we photocopy/enlarge graphics and/or response cards?*

No. The Florida Alternate Assessment is a secure document. It was designed to allow maximum access to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Traditional accommodations have been embedded in the administration of the assessment. Florida

Alternate Assessment uses large cards and a type (font) size of 30 point. A font size of 18 point or 20 point are considered large print.

51. May the arrangement of the response choices be changed by the test administrator?

No. The response choices for most of the items are provided prearranged in the Auxiliary Materials Booklet. For items with response cards (i.e., cutouts), the response cards must be placed on the work surface in the same order they are listed in the **Materials** section of the test manual.

52. *May the administration script be clarified or simplified?*

No. Standardized administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment is critical to the procedural validity of the test. It is important that the test administrator read the script exactly as it is written. The only exception is the “show me/tell me” portion of the script. This part of the script should be replaced for each student using language familiar to the students and according to his or her mode of response.

53. *How many items are on the test, and how long does it take to administer?*

Each content area will be composed of 16 core items with 3 levels of complexity per item (Participatory, Supported, and Independent). In addition, 4 items will be field tested for a total of 20 items per content area. For example, a 5th grade student will be tested in Reading, Mathematics, and Science. Depending on student performance, a total of 60 to 180 questions will be administered in grade 5. On the average, most teachers reported that it took one to three hours to administer each content area.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

54. *If a school receives all of the Florida Alternate Assessment test materials before the test window, may they begin testing?*

Yes. The start date for the administration of the assessment is upon receipt of test materials until the due date for test materials are to be returned. Districts should take into consideration the amount of time required to collect, package, and return materials to Piedra Data Services.

55. *May more than one teacher administer the Florida Alternate Assessment to a student? For example, can the teacher who teaches reading to the student administer the reading portion and the teacher who teaches math to the student administer the math portion?*

Yes. The requirements are that the teacher administering the assessment is a certified teacher or teacher of record and is familiar with the student.

56. If we know that a student is capable of performing at the independent level, may we skip the Participatory Level on the operational test?

No. All students must begin each item at the Participatory Level. Standardized administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment is critical to the procedural validity of the test.

57. Can the test be administered to a group of students?

No. The Florida Alternate Assessment requires individualized administration.

58. Are tests ever invalidated for medical or behavioral reasons as they can be for FCAT? Or, are those students just given a score of 0 on all items they are unable/unwilling to complete?

Yes, there are circumstances that would occur that require the assessment to be deemed invalid. However, there is a significant difference between unable to complete and unwilling to complete.

If a student becomes ill or is physically unable to complete the assessment, the teacher should attempt to complete the assessment at a later date. If unable to complete before the closing of the administration window, “invalid” should be bubbled on the answer sheet. Follow procedures outlined in the procedure manual when returning invalid answer sheets.

If the student refuses (unwilling) to participate in the assessment, administration of the assessment should include scaffolding at the participatory level where hand over hand is used to guide the student to the correct answer at score point 1. If the student continues to actively refuse to participate, the student is scored 0 for the item. Teachers should consider ending the session and picking it up at a later time and/or date.

59. Who is responsible for ensuring that the staff of a residential facility is trained?

Districts that have students who are eligible to be assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment are responsible for ensuring that facilities have teachers who have been trained in the administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment. If students are placed in residential facilities in a different district, staff should agree on who will be responsible for assessing the student.

60. Is there a limit to the number of times the Florida Alternate Assessment administrator can repeat a test item prompt?

Yes. Items can be repeated two times, for a total of three times.

61. *May the teacher assist a student with severe physical limitations?*

Yes. Physical assistance is appropriate for students with severe physical limitations if it is used to steady the student or as an accommodation to assist the student with the manipulation of objects such as rulers. Physical assistance as described in this accommodation is not used **to guide the student to the correct response**. Students with severe physical limitations can also use an alternate mode of response, such as an eye gaze and receive accommodations for the manipulation of objects, like rulers, required in the assessment.

The hand-over-hand method is used with all students during scaffolding at the Participatory Level. Students that require hand-over-hand and are guided to the correct answer are only eligible to receive a score of one point for that assessment item.

62. *May the test administrator direct student's attention by pointing to the response cards?*

Yes. Teachers **should** point to the cards or strips in the Auxiliary Materials Booklets.

63. *If a teacher has presented the pictures cards, but not read the question, may the teacher stop and return to that item later (e.g., a student with ASD is presented with the materials involved in the item, and starts to act out before the question can be read)?*

Yes, as long as the item has not been presented to the student, the administrator may stop and return to the item once the student is ready to resume.

64. *Does the test administrator have to follow the test item script?*

Yes. Standardized administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment is critical to the procedural validity of the test. It is important that the test administrator say the script exactly as it is written. The only exception is the “show me/tell me” portion of the script. This part of the script should be replaced for each student using language familiar to the student and according to his or her mode of response.

65. *May students use counters, number lines, coins, or calculators to complete math activities?*

Yes. Calculators, number lines and/or generic counters (e.g., game pawns, erasers, blocks) may be set out on the work surface for the student to use for any mathematics item. It is important to set these tools on the work surface only if the student uses them during instruction in mathematics unless specifically instructed to provide the item. At the end of

each item, the teacher should say to the student “You may use the (calculator, counters, number line) to help you answer the question.”

Some items specifically require the use of these tools. When they are required as designated in the **Materials** section, all students must be offered the tool to use to assist them in solving the problem.

66. *What happens if the pre-identified information on the Scannable Student Answer Sheet is incorrect?*

If any student information on the pre-identified Scannable Student Answer Sheet is missing or incorrect, the correct information must be entered in the Student Demographic Information Corrections section of the answer sheet. Complete **only** the demographic information that requires correction. Using a No. 2 pencil, carefully enter corrections in CAPITAL LETTERS or bubble in the correct information.

67. *Is the Florida Alternate Assessment a timed test?*

No. The Florida Alternate Assessment is not a timed test.

68. *Must students complete the entire content area of the Florida Alternate Assessment before taking a break?*

No. The test administrator should watch the student for indications that a break may be needed. Stop the test as needed and resume when the student is ready.

69. *If a test administrator knows that a student won’t respond to any test item at any level, can they just bubble in “no response” for every question and not administer the test?*

No. The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed to allow maximum access to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Students should be given the opportunity to respond to each item.

70. *May the test administrator “go back” to a test item the student previously attempted but did not answer correctly, if they feel the student knows the answer?*

No. At no time should an administrator return to an item that has already been administered. The use of cues and prompts can facilitate in assisting the student to maintain focus.

71. *Do all parts of one content area for the Florida Alternate Assessment need to be administered in one day?*

No. Flexible scheduling is built into the test design.

72. *May the answer choices be changed if they do not relate to a student’s experience? For example, if a student is fed through a gastric tube, the student might not relate to a picture of a food item.*

No. Standardized administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment is critical to the procedural validity of the test. All items in the assessment should be presented as they are written.

73. *May “touch-points” be added to numerals used in math response cards?*

Yes. If touch points are used in regular classroom instruction, they may be added to the number response cards.

74. *Do classroom visuals (e.g., calendars, alphabets, word walls, etc.) have to be covered during test administration?*

No. Classroom visuals do not present a problem during the administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment.

ASSESSMENT SCORING

75. *In the writing section, if the student’s oral response is partly in English and partly in Spanish, should it count as correct?*

No. The teacher can prompt the student to respond in English. All responses have to be in English in order for it to be counted as correct.

76. *May the test administrator record student responses in the Test Booklet and then go back and transfer answers onto the Scannable Student Answer Sheet (bubble sheet) after test administration?*

Yes. A Student Answer Sheet must be completed for each student. Test administrators may mark scores in the Florida Alternate Assessment Test Booklet and transfer only the highest score received for each test item to the Scannable Student Answer Sheet afterwards. If scores are being transferred, carefully match the test booklet items to the answer sheet items.

77. *May non-certified personnel transfer scores from the Test Booklet to the Scannable Student Answer Sheet?*

No. Only assessment administrators may transfer scores from the Test Booklet to the Scannable Student Answer Sheet.

78. *What score(s) are recorded on the Scannable Student Answer Sheet?*

Only the highest score received for each item should be recorded on the Scannable Student Answer Sheet. If more than one number is bubbled in, that item becomes a non-scorable item.

79. *Does the test administrator record the student's response even if they feel the student is guessing?*

Yes. Once the student has responded, the administrator must record that response.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND REPORTING

80. *When will the results of the Florida Alternate Assessment be available?*

Individual, school, and district level reports will be produced annually and shipped to districts prior to the end of the school year. The individual and school level reports will be packaged by school.

81. *If a student does not pass the test in 11th grade, does the student take the test again in 12th grade and until they graduate at the age of 21 or 22?*

There is no requirement that the student receive a specific score on the Florida Alternate Assessment in order to receive a Special Diploma. The administration of the assessment is grade specific, and there is no assessment requirement associated with the 12th grade.

82. *How many points does a participatory level student need to pass the test?*

The Florida Alternate Assessment is not a pass/fail assessment for any participant. Proficiency levels were determined during the standard setting process in 2008 by general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and parents of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

83. *How will results be given to schools?*

Assessment results are provided to schools via student and parent reports. Reports include individual test scores by content area, complexity level, and performance level.

STUDENT AND PARENT PREPARATION

84. *Will the state be providing “practice/sample” items so that teachers can get the students used to the testing format?*

Yes. Practice materials will be made available in the fall of each school year beginning with 2008-09 school year.

85. *How were parents informed of the new assessment?*

The Department of Education provided districts with letters to parents. There were two forms: one for parents of students who were selected to participate in the field test, and one general letter for parents of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The general letter was designed to inform parents that their child would participate in the statewide alternate assessment in March 2008. Both versions of these letters were provided in Spanish and Haitian Creole.

FEDERAL AND STATE COMPLIANCE CONCERNS

86. *What should the district do about missed services (e.g., Speech, Occupational Therapy) during the test administration period?*

Districts should use the same procedures that are implemented during the administration of the FCAT.

87. *Does the Department of Education need to be informed of the response method (e.g., eye gaze, pointing) the student will use prior to the assessment window?*

No. The Department of Education does not need to know the response modes students used during the assessment.

88. *Does the use of a “scribe” have to be documented in the student’s IEP, since the test administrator will be recording student responses?*

No. Since the Florida Alternate Assessment is an individually administered performance test, the administrator will be recording student responses. The administrator is not a scribe, only a recorder of response selections.

89. *Do specific manipulatives and/or the student’s response mode need to be listed on the IEP?*

No. All students eligible to be assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment can have a calculator, number line, and counters available on the work surface if the student uses them

during daily instruction. The student's response mode does not have to be indicated on the IEP.

CONTACT INFORMATION

90. *Who should we contact to answer questions regarding Florida Alternate Assessment materials?*

For questions regarding materials, shipments, and return procedures, contact **your** district's Assessment Coordinator or Alternate Assessment Coordinator.

91. *Who should we contact to answer questions regarding teacher training and training materials?*

For questions regarding teacher training or training materials, contact Angela Nathaniel at (850) 245-0475 or via e-mail at Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org.

92. *Who should we contact to answer questions regarding participation criteria, administration procedures, and allowable accommodations?*

For questions regarding participation criteria, the administration procedures, or allowable accommodations, contact Karen Denbroeder or Angela Nathaniel at (850) 245-0475 or via e-mail at Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org or Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org.